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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 16 September 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. de MARCO (Malta)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter)

- Programme of work

- Question of Palestine [23]

- The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives [28]

- Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security [42]

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- Question of Cyprus [43]

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- Iraqi aggression and the continued occupation of Kuwait in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations [153]

- Financing of activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991): other activities [156 (b)]

- Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations [117]

- Concluding address by the President

- Minute of silent prayer or meditation

- Closure of the forty-fifth session

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 125 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (ARTICLE 19 OF THE CHARTER) (A/45/1004/Add.4)

The PRESIDENT: Before turning to the first item on our agenda this morning, I should like to bring to the attention of representatives that since the issuance on Friday, 13 September 1991, in provisional form, of document A/45/1004/Add.4, containing a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informed me that Cambodia, Liberia and Sao Tome and Principe had made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter, I have been informed that Gambia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

The final version of document A/45/1004/Add.4, which was circulated this morning, reflects that situation.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

"A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: Before prceeding with the closure of the forty-fifth session the Assembly will consider the items retained on its agenda pursuant to decision 45/455 cf 21 December 1990. The Assembly will also consider a sub-item which, by its decision 45/402 B of 20 April 1991, the Assembly decided to include on the agenda of the present session.

AGENDA ITEM 23 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will turn first to agenda item 23, entitled "Question of Palestine".

Members may recall that on this item the Assembly adopted resolutions 45/67 A, B and C, 45/68 and 45/69, all of 6 December 1990. As members know, the item on the question of Palestine has been included on the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 23.

AGENDA ITEM 28 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that on this item the Assembly adopted resolution 45/15 of 20 November 1990. As members know, the item on the situation in Central America has been included on the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session of the Assembly.

(The President)

May I take it that the Assembly considers that the discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 28.

AGENDA ITEM 42 (continued)

ARMED ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST THE IRAQI NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS AND ITS GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM CONCERNING THE PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that on 21 September 1990 the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly and that on 14 December 1990 it further decided to defer consideration of the item to a later date during this session and to include it on the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 42.

AGENDA ITEM 43

QUESTION OF CYPRUS

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that on 21 September 1990 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it on the draft agenda of the forty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 43.

AGENDA ITEM 76 (continued)

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that the Assembly adopted resolution 45/75 of 11 December 1990. As members know, the item has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session oof the Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 76.

AGENDA ITEM 100 (continued)

CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that the Assembly adopted resolutions 45/107 to 123 and decision 45/428 of 14 December 1990. As members know, the item on crime prevention and criminal justice has been included on the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 100.

AGENDA ITEM 118 (continued)

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that the Assembly adopted resolutions 45/248 A and B, 45/249, 45/250 A to C, 45/251 and 45/252 A to C, of 21 December 1990, and decision 45/456 of 3 May 1991. As members know, this item has been included on the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 118.

AGENDA ITEM 153

IRAQI AGGRESSION AND THE CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that on 21 September 1990 the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

(The President)

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.;

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it on the draft agenda of the forty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 153.

AGENDA ITEM 156 (continued)

FINANCING OF ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991)

(b) OTHER ACTIVITIES

The PRESIDENT: Members may recall that on 29 April 1991 the Assembly decided to include this sub-item on the agenda of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this sub-item to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this sub-item and to include it on the draft agenda of the forty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of sub-item 156 (b).

AGENDA ITEM 117 (continued)

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT: As representatives know, during these past months I have carried out extensive consultations regarding the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. I did so in the awareness of the unique role that the General Assembly, with its almost universal membership, can play in

(The President)

the conduct of international relations at a time when developments in this field have opened up new challenges and opportunities. I encountered widespread support and encouragement as I continued to expand these consultations to the entire membership of the United Nations.

In pursuing this initiative I was assisted by many Permanent Representatives and the Chairmen of the Main Committees and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and, in particular, by the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Darko Silovic. All generously extended to me their full cooperation.

In many respects the ideas and suggestions put forward for consideration by Members were not entirely new. There is already in existence a body of General Assembly resolutions and decisions encouraging rationalization, revitalization and improvement of working procedures for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the Assembly, its relevance and its capability to fulfil the role envisaged for it under the United Nations Charter.

It is therefore incumbent on the Assembly and, by implication, on each one of us, to examine these provisions with the utmost care and imagination in order to apply to the work of the Assembly those measures which could contribute to making it more effective and more relevant in the context of a rapidly changing international reality.

Every single representative I have consulted has echoed agreement that the work of the Assembly must be revitalized, that it is essential for Member States to be secure in the knowledge that any one of them should be able to bring to the Assembly's attention any matter that is of concern to them.

(The President)

The consultations in which all of us have had the opportunity to participate have extended over the entire period of my presidency. I believe that great strides have been made towards formulating a number of recommendations, the implementation of which could have the desired effect of improving the work of the Assembly and increasing its capability for effective action. I feel strongly that the momentum of these important consultations should not be lost, but continued in a systematic, comprehensive manner.

We have during this presidency tried to ensure that a balance exists between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat as principal organs of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General aptly puts it in his annual report,

"it is not merely an issue of the internal working of the Organization; it bears on the guardianship of peace exercised by the United Nations." (A/46/1, p. 20)

Therefore, taking into account the discussions I have had with the Chairmen of regional groups and other representatives, I should like to propose that the Assembly decide to include on the draft agenda of the forty-sixth session the item entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly." There being no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded consideration of agenda item 117.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: Bringing to a conclusion the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly carries with it a measure of satisfaction that the United Nations has passed during the last 12 months a credibility test after living through agonizing decisions at a time of a renewed faith in peace, justice and freedom.

Living the Charter of the United Nations, inspired by the tragedies of a war, the consequences of which have perhaps only now ended, is in itself a demanding task.

The Assembly has tried, during this forty-fifth session, to understand itself and its role in an international scenario which has revolutionized the global situation.

During the course of the last 12 months the United Nations took one of the momentous decisions of its forty-five-year history.

Security Council resolution 678 (1990) was a far-reaching decision. It played a vital role in the liberation from occupation of one of the Organization's long-standing Members. It reaffirmed the central role that the United Nations can, and should, play in the conduct of international relations. It underlined our collective determination to ensure that in a new world order, free from the constraints of super-Power confrontation, it will be the strength of law and not the law of strength that will prevail.

Few will deny that the adoption of Security Council resolution 678 (1990) was a most difficult and painful decision to take. Ours is an Organization dedicated to peace and to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Wisdom and experience teach us that sometimes it is necessary to take up arms in the defence of peace. Yet taking up arms is in one respect also a sign of

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failure - the failure to find alternative, non-violent means of solving our differences.

This Assembly, in terms of Article 11 of the Charter, in considering the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, may deem it proper to examine the circumstances and the mechanisms required in the use of armed force, bearing in mind the principle of proportionality and humanitarian aspects involved.

The General Assembly may make recommendations in regard to such principles both to its members and to the Security Council. It is a problem requiring the sensitivity of members, dictated by the necessity to avoid appeasement in the face of aggression and, at the same time, avoid war-mongering noises which lead to confrontational positions precipitating the use of force.

The General Assembly, within this context, and through its clarity of thinking, has to avoid double-standard approaches where circumstances, both present and future, may lead to situations which may harm the credibility of the Organization.

In its involvement in troublesome missions, the United Nations is giving encouraging signs that the painstaking method of persuasion and diplomacy can also achieve results.

The latest developments regarding Cambodia are the clearest cases in point.

The Secretary-General's efforts on Cyprus may have lately been giving promise of measured progress.

Tomorrow our Organization will be enriched by the admission of seven new members. In the case of five of them - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, as well as the three Baltic States - the

(The President)

process of patient diplomacy, the thrust of events and a realistic approach have been effective in bringing these countries to the stage where they can take their rightful place among the community of nations.

We also cannot fail to reflect that these very days the Secretary-General is involved in what will, hopefully, be the final steps of his persistent and tenacious quest for a resolution of the hostage problem in Lebanon.

In our reviewing the achievements of our Organization in the recent past, related considerations arise. We should reflect that, besides the encouraging developments in the international scene, there are some persistent failures.

There is the failure to launch an effective process for a settlement of the Middle East problem, in spite of the many continuing and laudable efforts in this direction. The Middle East problem has a dimension which goes far beyond the immediate issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There is the equally serious failure to launch a comprehensive and meaningful North-South dialogue. While some parts of the world are achieving political freedom, many parts of the world are seeing that whatever freedom they achieved through the decolonization process, in which our Organization was deeply involved, is being jeopardized by poverty, underdevelopment and fratricidal strife.

The elimination of apartheid in South Africa, though making progress, is still turning out to be more difficult than most of us would have thought.

Problems and danger points persist in the various regions of the globe.

I believe that in many instances our Organization may not be putting all of its many resources at the disposal of the international community in the search for solutions to outstanding problems.

(The President)

I am thinking in particular of the greater role that the General Assembly of the United Nations can, and should, play in the conduct of all aspects of international relations. I am also thinking of the limited impact that our Organization still has on issues relating to economic and social development at both the national and the global levels - this in spite of the wealth of organs and institutions, ranging from specialized agencies to expert bodies, and the considerable resources which it has available for this purpose.

During the tenure of my presidency of the General Assembly I made it a primary objective to generate thinking on the revitalization process of this Assembly. This was done in the firm conviction that the recent developments in the world order have created a unique opportunity to unleash the vast potential for deliberation and decision-making that has, to a certain extent, lain dormant in our Assembly for over four decades.

I believe in a second-generation United Nations, a United Nations rooted in the principles and aspirations which went into its foundation 45 years ago, but taking nourishment from the breath-taking developments in international relations that have been occurring in recent years and have gathered even greater momentum over the last few months.

The General Assembly can, and should, be at the heart of these developments. It is the only principal organ under the Charter in which not only are all members equal, but in which all members are permanent members. It is the organ which has both the authority and capacity to deliberate on all matters which affect international relations. It is the unique forum where issues can be considered in their interrelated aspects, where all parties to a problem can be consulted simultaneously and where the process of decision-making could be complemented by an effective process of implementation.

(The President)

It is important that a balanced institutional relationship be maintained within and between the principal organs of the Ornanization, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat. I find confirmation of this thinking in the Secretary-General's report that this

"is not merely an issue of the internal working of the Organization; it bears on the guardianship of peace exercised by the United Nations". (A/46/1, p. 20)

Our Assembly has for many years suffered the debilitating effect of a confrontational world order which was inimical to its essential vocation for proper deliberation and collective decision-making. For many years we have spoken over each other's heads, rather than to each other's minds. For many years we have adopted decisions, many even by consensus, some of which none of us ever expected or intended to see implemented. For many years - too many years - the annual sessions of the Assembly became a ritual procedurally intensive for the first three months and then performing on a sporadic basis for the rest of the year, not always with direct relevance to what was actually happening in the world outside.

None will contest that the time for change has arrived but that change has not yet really taken place. In the intensive consultations conducted during the last 12 months over the question of the revitalization of the General Assembly, I have identified three areas where major reform is essential in order to fully exploit the Assembly's basic democratic structure. The essential object of my consultations was to make the Assembly both relevant and efficient, since efficiency without relevance may, in my view, be a retrograde step.

(The President)

First, we must make better use of and, where necessary, adapt existing internal structures and procedures. This is needed to make them reflect the role of the Assembly to be present and active in all global issues. The Assembly has to live up to the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter in order that it be relevant.

Secondly, we must take a close look at the decision-making process and its follow-up. This is needed to give both meaning and authority to the Assembly's deliberations, and hence to make it efficient.

Thirdly, we must improve the relationship between the work of the Assembly and that of the other parts of the United Nations system, including the Secretariat. This is needed to maintain the centrality of the General Assembly as envisaged in the Charter. It is also needed to ensure that the total resources of the United Nations system are brought to bear in a harmonized and effective fashion in an effort to resolve international problems.

The President of the General Assembly not only presides over and represents the General Assembly but has, in my view, the responsibility to bring it and its decisions close to the peoples in those areas where the United Nations is needed most. Early in the new year, the time when our Organization was so deeply concerned with the emergency which had arisen in the Gulf, I visited the camps in the occupied territories and in Jordan. It was important to assure the Palestinian refugees that the world community still cared deeply about their plight both in its political as well as in its social and humanitarian aspects. It was essential to be close in those difficult days to the Commissioner-General and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in their dedicated service to the Palestinian refugees and in defence of human rights.

(The President)

On the way to Jerusalem there is a cemetery where members of the United Nations peace-keeping force who have died in the performance of their duties are buried. I stood by the graves of those soldiers and I felt that the General Assembly was with me. Last Friday in Lebanon another soldier of the United Nations peace-keeping force gave his life while carrying out his duties. To date, over 700 of them have lost their lives in the service of the United Nations. Theirs is a martyrdom in the service of peace.

In the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait there are outposts manned by the forces of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission. The heat was intense when I visited the men of different nationalities manning the posts. It is time to consider the quiet dedication which is already inspired by our Organization and which can so enrich the future of a second-generation United Nations. Reflecting on the unity of purpose guiding the soldiers of peace from diverse parts of the globe, one sees the embryo of those forces which the Charter envisages for the maintenance of peace and security.

As President of the Assembly, I was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 21 June 1991, in time to witness the early stages of the resurgence of that troubled country from the strife of civil war. In a visit to the refugees camps of Teferi Ber I came face to face with a striking instance of one of the bitterest tragedies of our time - the hunger refugees, with their untold and often apparently irremediable sufferings.

Here again, in my meetings with United Nations officials from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organizations, I experienced another dimension of the personal dedication and commitment which the United Nations has such tremendous capacity to generate: the unknown heroes of today, young men and women - including many from diverse

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non-governmental organizations - who are dedicating the best years of their lives to the service of those who, for many, may appear to be forgotten by humanity.

In this context, I should like specifically to mention - in this twentieth year of operation, further to a 1970 resolution of the General Assembly - the competence and commitment of the 2,000 United Nations volunteers, specialists and field workers currently serving in more than 100 developing countries. I intend making a special reference to this in a message to the Third Intergovernmental Meeting on Volunteers due to take place later this year in Kathmandu.

It is a sad indictment of our world of savage contrasts between wealth and poverty that the question of refugees, victims of natural as well as man-made disasters, has to figure so prominently in the work of our Organization. I came across another instance of this situation in my own country and in Italy, in August, with thousands of Albanian refugees - refugees not from political circumstances in a country which has with courage taken up the road to democracy, but from a very difficult economic situation.

Undoubtedly our Organization has the set task of enlarging its already extensive experience and commitment in this field, especially in relation to those who do not fall within the legal definition of refugees under existing international conventions. This is a matter which I have taken up with the Secretary-General as well as with UNHCR. I am most encouraged with their responses as well as with the already expressed intention of many delegations to take up this matter as a priority item during the forthcoming session of the Assembly.

(The President)

The past year has been yet another year of major international developments and it was a gratifying opportunity to bring the Assembly's presence to bear upon some of these important developments. I was in Pyongyang and Seoul shortly before the two Koreas applied for membership of our Organization. I was also in Kiev during the last days of the dramatic events in the Soviet Union in late August.

A visit to Ukraine brings foremost another major global problem of our time - that of a deteriorating environment. In looking at the disaster of Chernobyl, I reflected - as I had earlier done amidst the raging fires of the Kuwaiti oil fields - upon the huge tasks that lie before humanity in the effort to save itself from destruction. Chernobyl is an international disaster and, as such, it requires an international approach in its solution.

(The President)

The Pledging Conference on Chernobyl, scheduled for 20 September 1991, is a reminder of both international solidarity and international involvement. I am sure that many will be those Member countries which will give tangible evidence of their solidarity.

The environment problem must be a major item on the international agenda, which awaits the input of a revitalized General Assembly.

May I share with members, on this my last occasion to address the Assembly as President, a reflection on the Trusteeship Council. It has served, and is still serving, its purpose under the Charter; the fact that we are welcoming into the General Assembly, tomorrow, two countries - Micronesia and the Marshall Islands - through the Trusteeship Council is a reflection of its relevance, but its very success in bringing to nationhood so many countries and peoples previously under trust has diminished its role. May we suggest that, in addition to its role under the Charter, the Trusteeship Council should hold in trust for humanity humanity's common heritage and its common concerns: the environment; the protection of extraterritorial zones and of the resources of the sea and of the seabed; the climate; and the rights of future generations. These we have to hold in trust for humanity, and the Trusteeship Council may be the right organ for this purpose.

Another dimension of the Assembly's revitalization process lies in an enhanced political input. I am reminded, in this connection, of the distinction which the Assembly's first President, Paul-Henri Spaak, made in his concluding speech in 1946. President Spaak said:

> "I went to Geneva a few times before the war, and I had the impression of being at a meeting of diplomats. Here I have had the distinct impression of being at a meeting of statesmen.

(The President)

"I really do think that we have set up a tentative world parliament. I am not quite sure yet that the system is entirely good, but I must admit that the first attempt which we have witnessed here inspires me with confidence." (Official Records of the General Assembly, 67th Plenary Meeting, p. 1471)

I believe that the work of the Assembly should constitute a blend of political thrust and diplomatic exercise. Over the years, our Assembly has lost its political edge by largely marginalizing the part played by Ministers to that of welcome - but short-stay - honoured guests whose role it is to deliver speeches before quickly departing. In my consultations, I have explored the possibility of greater ministerial involvement in the work of the General Assembly and of creating the opportunity for a more active role to be played by parliamentarians in the work of the Main Committees, perhaps through a better staggering of Assembly meetings over the year.

There is an important aspect which, in my view, requires the constant attention of the Assembly. I refer to the question of the North-South dialogue. Though we may have moved away, in our efforts at economic development of the third-world countries, from the "dismal science" mentality by introducing the "human face" dimension, may we perhaps add to this notion the notion of a face which is both human and honest? We still do not have the equivalent of East-West détente in the North-South relationship. We think that the General Assembly has to have a major, and a clearer, relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions in order to bring in that ingredient which has been lacking in past debates and without which hopes of a breakthrough may fade away.

(The President)

The maintenance of peace and security can be achieved only at this other, dramatic frontier, the war against want. So long as the "poverty curtain" is still there, peace and security are at risk. This fact was brought home to me with unnerving immediacy by a team of United Nations field officials from various agencies during my recent visit to Ghana. There I met over a dozen very dedicated and able professionals who spoke to me enthusiastically about the varied work in which they were involved, the difficulties they faced, and the extensive efforts they had to undertake in order to fulfil their tasks.

Two points which were made to me during the meeting, however, made an impression on me. One was the comment from those attending that it was very rare for them to have the opportunity to speak about their work to a senior representative of the General Assembly. The other was the bitter observation by one of the officials that in spite of the efforts that they were putting in, both individually and collectively, the work of the agencies they represented constituted only a minor input into the development efforts needed in the countries where they were operating.

In my opening statement to the Assembly a year ago, I underlined the human realities behind the statistics with which we are dealing, what it means in terms of human suffering when we say that 1.1 billion people live in extreme poverty, that the number of countries considered as least developed among developing countries rose from 24 in 1971 to 42 in 1990. Clearly, we have a long and difficult road still before us.

It has been a privilege to serve the Assembly and the United Nations during these last 12 months. It has been an honour for my country, Malta, to preside over the Assembly. The cooperation and help which I have received from the delegations here and from their Governments in my visits to various

(The President)

countries, listening and learning, were fundamental for a better evaluation of the aim, purposes and future of the Organization.

I want to thank the Secretary-General for his advice and assistance. His wisdom and his calm diplomacy are an asset to the Organization. I think his stewardship of the United Nations is leaving a hallmark on its future operations.

To Under-Secretary-General Spiers and his dedicated staff, my thanks for helping me preside over the Assembly.

I said that it was a privilege for me to serve the United Nations. It was more than a privilege: it was an experience in the human dimension. When addressing the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, in Moscow a few days ago, this concept of the human dimension reminded me of the genius of Leonardo da Vinci in putting man at the centre of creation, reaching out to discover and understand the universe. It is this human dimension, in its universality, which is the commitment of the United Nations.

The United Nations is a complex organization. The sensitivities of all nations here have to be respected. Realpolitik cannot be ignored. In the economic world miracles do not happen, and in the social field it takes time to heal differences and to bring in new cultures. Yet the United Nations, with all the misgivings and all its mistakes, is fundamental for the cause of progress in the world. It is as powerful and efficient as the member countries want it to be.

But there is an aspect which remains the cornerstone of the Organization: it is the concept of peace. We have to safeguard peace. We have also learned how to defend peace. But peace itself can be negative if born in the acceptance of a denial of human rights, if misery and hunger are

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the life sentence to which billions of people are condemned. Pandit Nehru, who spent his life suffering for freedom and yearning for peace, said:

"Peace is indivisible; so is freedom. So is prosperity now; so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments."

For the peace that we are striving for, and for which millions have died, is peace in freedom. This is our commitment in the United Nations. This is our shared privilege. This is our common responsibility.

MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

The PRESIDENT: We are now coming to the end of the forty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly. I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

CLOSURE OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

The PRESIDENT: I declare closed the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.